

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2010 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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Type of School: (Check all that apply)    ☐ Charter ☐ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. Sharon Aspinall

Official School Name: Highland Middle School

School Mailing Address:  
310 W Rockland Rd  
Libertyville, IL 60048-2739

County: Lake State School Code Number\*: 34049070002

Telephone: (847) 362-9020 Fax: (847) 362-0870

Web site/URL: [http://www.d70schools.org/schoolsites/?school\\_id=4](http://www.d70schools.org/schoolsites/?school_id=4) E-mail: [saspinall@d70schools.org](mailto:saspinall@d70schools.org)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. W. Guy Schumacher

District Name: Libertyville SD 70 Tel: (847) 362-9656

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

Date\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mrs. Judith Zoellick

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

Date\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager ([aba.kumi@ed.gov](mailto:aba.kumi@ed.gov)) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)

4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
 1 Middle/Junior high schools  
 High schools  
 K-12 schools  
**5 TOTAL**

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 10145

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☒ Suburban  
☐ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural

4. 8 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	6	169	163	332
K			0	7	152	151	303
1			0	8	158	165	323
2			0	9			0
3			0	10			0
4			0	11			0
5			0	12			0
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							958

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
6 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
4 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
85 % White
3 % Two or more races
<b>100 % Total</b>

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 3 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	13
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	15
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	28
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	909
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.031
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3.080

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 4

Number of languages represented: 3

Specify languages:

The languages represented by the four students are Korean, Spanish, and Gyjarati.

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %

Total number students who qualify: 43

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

Total Number of Students Served: 76

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>11</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>12</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>26</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>12</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>2</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>7</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>58</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>84</u>	<u>1</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	93%	93%	94%	95%	94%
Teacher turnover rate	17%	10%	25%	3%	6%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

The higher than normal teacher turnover rate in the years 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 is due to retirements. State laws changed in regard to benefit package allowances, which in return encouraged those staff members with adequate number of years of service and age to retire before the current contract expired.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
<b>Total</b>		%

## PART III - SUMMARY

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“If it’s to be, it’s up to me.” More than just a string of words on an August bulletin board, Highland’s motto reflects the day-to-day culture of our learning community. Students are encouraged to be self-directed learners and take ownership of their education. Our mission is to ensure that Highland students experience learning that prepares them to live and work in the 21st Century. The Applications of Learning, as outlined by the Illinois State Board of Education, are used as a driving force to develop the dispositions and knowledge for success in the 21st Century. Every member of our learning community is committed to the development of these cross-curricular skills, which include solving problems, communicating, using technology, working on teams, and making connections.

Highland maintains a tradition of excellence. Not content to be complacent with past successes, Highland’s learning community continues to strive to exceed expectations. As evidence of this, Highland was awarded the Academic Excellence Award in 2008 in acknowledgement of more than 90% of the student body meeting or exceeding state standards in reading and math for three consecutive years. The quest for continual improvement is reflected through Highland’s emphasis on lifelong learning for both students and staff. Another milestone of which we are particularly proud is the shift from being internally focused to adopting a more global perspective. Highland’s commitment to service has become part of our school culture, as the entire school community is involved in a range of projects impacting those in need. Students and staff work collaboratively to educate one another about local and global problems and take action to effect change. As the only middle school in District 70, meeting the high expectations of our community motivates Highland staff and students. Our community values education, understands its worth, and has always supported our school in its academic endeavors. Highland’s close ties with the community can easily be seen by the number of staff who are Highland alumni and by the many teachers who live in District 70 in order to have their children attend our fine school. Local businesses show their support by funding partnership grants for innovative educational programs.

Highland’s commitment to the arts is unsurpassed, another example of our many strengths and accomplishments. We have a plethora of clubs and organizations that meet before, during, and after school, giving each student an opportunity to engage in learning outside the classroom and connect with peers. Extra-curricular activities range from interest groups to academic clubs to athletics. Each sports season there is at least one no-cut sport, encouraging more students to be stung by the Highland Hornet spirit. The trophy case at Highland overflows with symbols of our success. Highland consistently wins the Bright A+ Award, which is only given to the top 5% achieving schools in the state, as well as the Lake County Attendance Award.

At Highland Middle School, the educational needs of our students drive the decisions we make. Students experience a learning environment where form follows function. From the physical layout to the 21st Century classrooms, the design of the building reflects Highland’s commitment to meeting our students’ social-emotional and academic needs. Facilitating the transition from elementary to middle school, the sixth grade academic teams are located in their own wing of the building. Seventh and eighth grade students attend classes grouped by content areas allowing students and teachers to build upon interdisciplinary connections. All students are assigned to smaller grade-level teams, a more child-centered approach which builds community. Additionally, Highland’s environment incorporates technology to facilitate learning, encouraging student communication and team collaboration.

Highland’s teachers are models of lifelong learning with eighty-two percent earning advanced degrees and one achieving National Board Certification. With a passion for nurturing children and a commitment to education, our teachers inspire our students to become 21st Century learners who are living examples of our motto, “If it’s to be, it’s up to me”.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

Perhaps the best exemplar of Highland Middle School's tradition of excellence is our students' consistently high level of academic achievement. Our learning community expects that our students will not simply meet, but exceed State Standards. As evidenced by Illinois Student Achievement Test (ISAT) data, Highland students continue to meet this challenge.

In accordance with No Child Left Behind legislation, the Illinois Student Achievement Test is administered to measure our students' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Students' performance is reported along a continuum of descriptors including "Warning", "Below Standard", "Meets Standard", and "Exceeds Standard". ISAT performance descriptors and scores were derived after assessment experts used statistical analysis and age-appropriate standards to set cut points on the scale scores of students for each test and grade level. Analysis of ISAT results from 2005-2009 reveals a trend of continual improvement in performance. For further information, the reader is advised to see the Interactive Illinois Report Card at [iirc.niu.edu](http://iirc.niu.edu).

Highland's percentage of students meeting (M) or exceeding (E) state composite performance levels, including both reading and math, improved from 88 (2005) to 96 (2009). During this same time period, gains continue to be noted in the content areas of reading and math at respective grade levels. Sixth grade reading results reveal the percentage of students meeting and/or exceeding (%M+E) improved from 92 to 96. Students exceeding standards (%E) grew eight percent. Sixth grade math results show stable performance in % M+E (97-95) with %E increasing (40-43). Data from seventh grade reading demonstrates gains in %M+E (91 - 95). Of note it was % E that grew from 28 to 48. Seventh grade math reveals consistent performance (94 to 96 %M+E), with a significant spike in %E from 46 to 57. Eighth grade reading demonstrates strong performance (94 to 98 %M+E), with %E improving from 25 to 31. Perhaps the most significant gains are evidenced in eighth grade math: the %M+E jumps seventeen percentage points from 80 to 97, with the %E growing nearly twenty percentage points from 42 to 61.

An examination of academic achievement across Highland's student population reveals both areas of strength and challenges for the future. Highland can celebrate the successes of its Hispanic, Asian, and low-income students who exhibit consistent achievement in reading: in 2009, 96% M+E at sixth grade, 95% M+E at seventh grade, and 98% M+E at eighth grade. Likewise, consistent performance was evidenced in math: in 2009, 95% M+E at sixth grade, 96% M+E at seventh grade, and 97% M+E at eighth grade. A closer inspection of a sub-group performance indicates that our Special Education (IEP) population's scores merit attention: gaps between the grade level's performance in reading exist. In 2009, data revealed 74% and 86% M+E at the sixth and eighth grades, respectively. In contrast, 47% M+E at the seventh grade level. Likewise, gains in math skills have not met our expectations. Administrators and educators continue to collaborate in order to provide direct instruction and strategies that will best enable our Special Education students to demonstrate gains commensurate with our students as a whole. At Highland Middle School, every child is expected to reach his/her potential in the classroom and we have observed this through standardized assessment.

### 2. Using Assessment Results:

"Form follows function" not only applies to the physical map of our building, but also speaks to the manner in which assessment results shape and improve the instructional design implemented at Highland.

Following release of assessment results, a multidisciplinary team routinely convenes on Data Retreats. The purpose of these retreats is two-fold: first, to identify the broad and/or discrete areas of student strength/need



and second, to determine research-based instructional methods to close any learning gaps or discrepancies. Content-area strands are examined and item analysis results are reviewed in order to determine research-based instructional methods that will have the greatest influence on student achievement. These methods are articulated formally via Highland's School Improvement Plan and informally via content-area planning and goal-setting meetings.

Consider the following example from 2006. Despite strong overall reading performance, Data Retreat members noted the Content Reading Strategies strand was consistently weaker in comparison to other strands. A School Improvement Plan was implemented to specifically address the skill of reading in the content areas; instructors were encouraged to utilize methodologies that both modeled and instructed this skill. Professional development was sponsored by the District, with many educators seeking additional professional development via conferences, seminars, and graduate coursework. And the outcome? Not surprisingly, in 2009 the Content Reading Strategy strand improved at all three grade levels. We were hopeful this would impact overall student reading performance. We were not disappointed: the percentage of students meeting and exceeding state standards grew at all three grade levels, as did the number of students *exceeding* state standards. It is believed that the emphasis on Content Reading Strategies has also contributed to significant gains in math performance, which requires a student to use text in order to interpret, make predictions, and draw conclusions given a set of data.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

Highland Middle School successfully communicates with the residents of Libertyville. We utilize a myriad of methods to ensure that all members of our community are well informed about assessment data and achievements. Publications online allow families the opportunity to keep abreast of current district information while on the go. For our active community, these accessible resources make it easy for residents to get the information they need at any time. Printed newsletters are mailed to families without Internet access.

In addition, to keep Highland's community actively informed, District 70's Parent Curricular Advisory Committee, comprised of parents, our Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and educators, meets to share information and to provide a forum for parents to review and understand assessment data.

Highland's academic and student achievements as well as ISAT data are prominently featured in local media outlets. We are fortunate to have a dedicated public relations liaison that supports this dissemination of information. To ensure public understanding of ISAT data, Highland staff members hold evening informational meetings for the community to interpret student scores.

In keeping true to our motto and increasing utilization of technology, Highland maintains both a school website as well as individual teacher websites. These websites contain information such as daily announcements, local assessment information, calendars, and links to helpful resources. Additionally, each teacher keeps his/her website current with information and homework that students can access to ensure they have everything they need to be successful in the classroom. Students have individual passwords to Highland's online grade book program. This accessibility allows students to monitor their progress in all academic areas, offering another tool in becoming self-directed learners. Parents have access as well, facilitating dialogue between parent and child in a team approach to academic success. Highland's annual student-led conferences empower students to showcase their goals, assessment results and academic achievements through communication with parents and teachers. Our communication model demonstrates Highland's commitment to sharing assessment information with all our stakeholders.

#### **4. Sharing Success:**

Highland Middle School demonstrates leadership in the education field through its sharing of curricula and program successes with other school districts. Currently, all department leaders meet for articulation with staff from our high school district and all feeder elementary districts. During these biannual meetings, we share curricula, assessment results, teaching strategies, shifts in student demographics, policy updates, and district and building goals.

Additionally, Highland hosts neighboring school districts that wish to see a particular program or curricular materials. For example, schools looking to design engaging units often visit our physical education department to observe their dance unit. Our social studies curriculum, which uses simulations and multiple modes of teaching makes Highland a must see. Highland also provides a positive experience for teachers in training. Many student teachers and students completing their practicum hours are witness to education theory in practice as they observe differentiation, flexible grouping, and technology incorporated into lessons.

Finally, Highland Middle School and District 70 host and participate in a series of professional opportunities designed to share successful programs. Many staff members belong to state and national professional organizations that allow them to network with a diverse set of educators. Our school has provided neighboring districts with training by sending staff members to present seminars on student-led conferences, math lesson design, and social studies implementation. Recently, District 70 hosted the first regional Promethean Board forum allowing teachers from the Lake County area the opportunity to display their classroom use of interactive whiteboard technology and come away with new ideas. This collaboration is extended through our development of a professional blog. The sharing of program and curricular successes with the education community is a core characteristic of Highland Middle School, a tradition that would continue in the event Highland Middle School is awarded Blue Ribbon status.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

Highland prides itself on a rigorous curriculum that is research-based and standards driven. Highland's language program, offering French and Spanish, incorporates the Five C's of Foreign Language: communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities. All sixth graders take a twelve-week exploratory class in both languages. The seventh and eighth grade programs offer the equivalent of one year of high school language. Ninety-four percent of Highland's seventh graders and eighty-eight percent of eighth graders are presently enrolled in French or Spanish. Students move from basic vocabulary acquisition to speaking, reading, and writing in their new language. Traditionally, eighty-five percent of Highland students enter high school with a second year level of competency in French or Spanish.

Our language arts and literature curriculum takes a balanced approach to literacy. Our overall goal is to develop and advance critical readers, diversified writers, eloquent speakers, effective listeners, and analytical and divergent thinkers. Our eighty-minute daily blocked schedule incorporates grammar instruction, writing development and publication, discovery and comparison of the elements of literature, and communication through written, verbal and technological means.

Highland's social studies curriculum includes a sixth grade focus on geography and ancient civilizations. The five themes of geography provide the structure for understanding the development of civilization. Seventh grade curriculum builds on the themes of human-environment interaction and movement as students learn about the discovery of the New World, subsequent colonization of North America, and the American journey through the Civil War. Eighth grade continues the study of American history into the twenty-first century with an emphasis on American government. Across all grade levels, students participate in role-playing, debate, experiential activities, research, reflection and analysis that bring history alive in the class.

Our inquiry-based science curriculum is comprised of three areas of study: earth, life, and physical sciences. Students build models, perform dissections, design and conduct experiments, test hypotheses, and communicate findings in conjunction with the scientific method. In sixth grade, students are immersed in hands-on activities as they explore topics including astronomy, meteorology, and geology. Seventh graders study biology. The interdependence between living things and their respective biome is stressed, building environmentally responsible students. In eighth grade, students study physics and chemistry. By constructing cars, catapults, rockets and electric circuits, they learn about chemical bonding and the relationship between mass, force and energy.

Highland's mathematics curriculum is purposefully aligned with Illinois State and NCTM Standards. Balanced and technology-enriched, it focuses on conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Assessment is formative, summative, and differentiated to provide feedback and guide instruction. Instruction is linked to contexts that are relevant, globally oriented and connected to other subject areas. Effective communication is developed through hands-on labs as well as problem-solving groups that build teaming, collaboration, and interpersonal skills. Students are encouraged to communicate mathematical thinking and verbalize their strategies providing opportunities to gain insights from others. Highland's mathematics curriculum successfully prepares students to meet the increasing problem-solving demands of the 21st Century.

Since Highland Middle School was recognized as a Fine Arts School of Excellence in 1991, our fine arts program has continued to flourish. Currently seventy-five percent of the student body participates in an extracurricular performing group. Highland has twelve musical groups consisting of concert bands, jazz ensembles, choirs, and orchestras. Band and orchestra members are supported via individual and group

lessons. Our performers shine at competitions, earning first division ratings in both group and individual events. A dedicated team of staff members directs student production of an annual musical. Over 100 students participate on and off stage to make the show a reality. Drama and music classes teach the elements of acting, theater design, musical form, composition and rhythmic notation to all students. Fine arts are further integrated in our physical education department through student dance performances.

#### **2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:**

(This question is for elementary schools only)

Highland's reading and language arts curriculum provides a balanced literacy approach to strengthen students' skills in reading, writing and communicating. This curriculum is constantly being reevaluated based on current Illinois State Standards, national standards, and best practice research. Every year, we fine-tune the curriculum based on student achievement and performance. Students are engrossed in language arts and literature for eighty minutes every day and engaged in some form of reading or writing activity the entire time. This block schedule model allows for more flexibility and differentiation for all student needs.

Whether highlighting literary elements or parts of speech, all students are immersed in a common vocabulary to strengthen their skills and comprehension. One strength of our program is the emphasis on word studies focusing on Latin and Greek origins, and the application of this knowledge to all academic areas. Students are encouraged to extend these skills beyond the literature classroom. By the time students leave Highland, they will discover over 450 Latin and Greek stems leading to a better understanding of innumerable vocabulary words used in every facet of their lives.

Another strength of our program is our teachers' dedication to modeling quality reading and writing behaviors. Weekly scheduled library visits are an integral part of the literature curriculum where students and teachers alike engage in reading for personal enjoyment. This critical time develops an appreciation for reading. Teachers strive for a balance of fiction and nonfiction reading and analysis in their classrooms. Students own and annotate novels allowing for development of interactive reading skills. Students and teachers dialogue with personal journals and literature letters creating an open forum for modeling good writing. Highland's approach to reading instruction demonstrates our commitment to developing a community of lifelong readers.

#### **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

At Highland Middle School, our goal is to prepare our students to live and work in the 21st Century. The use of technology is essential in this endeavor. To this end, Highland not only offers an extensive applied technology curriculum, but also incorporates the National Educational Technology Standards into all curriculum areas. Our staff and students are equipped with a multitude of hardware including desktop computers, laptops, digital cameras, document cameras, LCD projectors, and interactive whiteboards. With a computer/student ratio of approximately 1: 2.5, Highland students have ample access to computers with student-use computers in all learning areas.

The Applied Technology curriculum begins with sixth graders being taught the basic use of keyboarding and computer processes. Students create resumes, presentations, spreadsheets and graphs. The curriculum expands in seventh grade to include the use of search engines and more advanced computer processes. Our applied technology teachers coordinate topics of research with core curricular teachers to enhance all subject areas. Students create "choose your own adventure" digital stories, newsletters, and advanced spreadsheet projects. The eighth grade curriculum applies technological knowledge and includes courses in web authoring, movie production and digital imaging. Students are given the autonomy to enroll in technology classes of their own choice, allowing them the opportunity to showcase their abilities using various forms of multimedia. All students have access to our extensive district-wide network, and each has his/her own home folder where all information is stored and easily accessible from anywhere in the building. The District also provides a

Technology Literacy Coach, an important resource available to assist students and teachers in integrating technology in core classes. The success of our technology curriculum is evidenced by the popularity of our extracurricular Tech Club. Highland's Applied Technology curriculum enhances student achievement in all curricular areas and prepares our students to live and work successfully in the 21st Century.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

Highland Middle School prides itself on meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of each student. Differentiation at Highland begins in the classroom. Content and instructional methods are differentiated based on individual student needs, which are assessed prior to and during the learning process. For example, content can be differentiated into a self-directed real world problem-solving activity or broken down into small group activities focused on specific content information and skills. Accommodations and modifications are regularly made for students in all disciplines. These might include reducing content to key terms and concepts, text at students' reading levels, and alternate assessments. Supplemental materials may include manipulatives, visuals, auditory enrichments and exploratory assignments that support and enhance the learning of all students and their respective learning modalities. Common team planning times facilitate collaboration and development of differentiated instruction. Planning is not specifically focused on students with an Individualized Educational Plan, but designed to benefit all students.

Additionally, differentiation occurs in a broader sense at Highland. Our curriculum offers a variety of classes that provide the opportunity for students to learn at their appropriate level. We are particularly proud of our advances in developing a Response to Intervention (RtI) plan that provides additional classes in reading and/or math to students not meeting ISAT standards or with skills significantly below grade level. Students identified by a universal screener are placed in our flexible RtI classrooms where reading and math skills are remediated to help students strengthen critical skills to close the gaps in learning. To address the needs of students that exceed Illinois State Standards, accelerated and gifted curriculums are available in the areas of math, reading, and language arts. This well articulated full replacement gifted program is aligned with National and State gifted standards for both teacher preparedness and delivery of rigorous curriculum. In these environments, students are challenged with above grade level content and instruction to maximize their learning potential. Ensuring that all students grow in their capacity to learn is Highland's fundamental goal.

#### **5. Professional Development:**

By continuing to grow as professionals, Highland staff members increase their efficacy in the classroom. Professional development is expected as part of the culture of the school. Time built into the school year for staff professional development helps to educate staff about district, state, and national initiatives. In-house leadership is encouraged, and frequently the expertise of building staff is used to help train others. For example, training that has been done with Response to Intervention (RtI) has been led by staff members who have received extensive training with RtI and work intimately with RtI procedures within the school and district. They, in turn, have shared their knowledge with the rest of the faculty during meeting and institute time.

At Highland, an emphasis in recent years has been placed on examining staff members as learners and exploring communication with others based on learning and personality type. This information not only helps enhance relationships between colleagues, but also creates an awareness to help staff members work better with students. By applying the concepts learned from the training to their own classrooms, teachers are able to gain a better understanding of who their students are as learners.

This school year, a new direction in professional development within the district was chartered. District 70 now incorporates self-directed learning into the Applications of Learning. The Applications of Learning, as

outlined in the Illinois Learning Standards, form the foundation for our school's educational approach. With this in mind, teachers are responsible and empowered to design their own professional development. Each member of the teaching staff developed an individual professional development plan for the school year. In addition, teachers are encouraged to seek out professional activities and learning opportunities outside of the district. A professional development committee helps to facilitate staff members' attendance at conferences and workshops. This format allows staff to take part in self-directed learning and model the process for their students at the same time.

## **6. School Leadership:**

The leadership role of Highland's administration, comprised of a principal and assistant principal, promotes a school culture that embraces excellence and upholds the academic expectations of our learning community. The development of teacher leaders is another critical component of the leadership structure at Highland Middle School. Formal leadership roles, including content-area coordinators and grade level team leaders, allow staff members to represent, teach, and mentor their colleagues in our building. Educators have multiple opportunities throughout the workday to collaborate and exchange perspectives. Dedicated before-school meeting times and common planning periods create a climate focused on relationships that promote student achievement.

Encouraging accountability is a role our administration takes to heart - educators are personally responsible for meeting the needs of each child within their classrooms. To that end, the administration works to develop staff members' pedagogical skills. The administration uses staff meetings, in-service activities, and the evaluation process as a forum to communicate current research and data in regards to best practice. Additionally, our teacher-mentor program connects new staff members with experienced teachers. The administration uses assessment data to drive decision making for school improvement. The leadership's vision to improve student achievement is communicated to all staff members and implemented by the many teacher-leaders within the school.

Our administrators' commitment to fiscal responsibility is evident throughout the building, from laptops available for student use to furniture purchased for 21st Century classrooms. Tools with research-based efficacy are selected and purchased by the administration to support educators in their instruction. By managing financial resources thoughtfully in addition to fostering a climate of shared leadership, our administration creates a culture that supports academic achievement for all of our students.

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Edition/Publication Year:

Publisher: Pearson Assessment/Harcourt Assessment/Pearson Assessment

2006/2007/2008/2009

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	95	95	96	97	0
% Exceeds Standards	43	36	52	40	0
Number of students tested	295	319	287	292	0
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	1	1	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	75				
% Exceeds Standards	8				
Number of students tested	12				
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	81				
% Exceeds Standards	25				
Number of students tested	16				
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	79	52	65	82	
% Exceeds Standards	11	4	0	14	
Number of students tested	19	23	23	22	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	100	95	100	100	
% Exceeds Standards	77	65	87	83	
Number of students tested	13	20	23	12	

Notes:

In the school year 2004-2005, sixth grade students were not assessed in Mathematics.

Subject: Reading  
Edition/Publication Year:  
2006/2007/2008/2009

Grade: 6 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test  
Publisher: Pearson Assessment/Harcourt Assessment/Pearson  
Assessment

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	96	94	94	92	0
% Exceeds Standards	49	52	57	41	0
Number of students tested	294	319	287	293	0
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	100	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	1	1	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	83				
% Exceeds Standards	25				
Number of students tested	12				
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	81				
% Exceeds Standards	25				
Number of students tested	16				
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	68	57	61	61	
% Exceeds Standards	16	9	0	13	
Number of students tested	19	23	23	23	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	100	90	100	100	
% Exceeds Standards	83	70	83	67	
Number of students tested	12	20	23	12	

Notes:

In the year 2004-2005, sixth grade students were not assessed in the area of Reading.



Subject: Mathematics

Edition/Publication Year:

2006/2007/2008/2009

Grade: 7 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Publisher: Pearson Assessment/Harcourt Assessment/Pearson Assessment

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	95	95	96	97	0
% Exceeds Standards	43	36	52	40	0
Number of students tested	295	319	287	292	0
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	1	1	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	75				
% Exceeds Standards	8				
Number of students tested	12				
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	81				
% Exceeds Standards	25				
Number of students tested	16				
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	79	52	65	82	
% Exceeds Standards	11	4	0	14	
Number of students tested	19	23	23	22	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	100	95	100	100	
% Exceeds Standards	77	65	87	83	
Number of students tested	13	20	23	12	

Notes:

In the school year 2004-2005, seventh grade students were not assessed in Mathematics.

Subject: Reading  
Edition/Publication Year:  
2006/2007/2008/2009

Grade: 7 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test  
Publisher: Pearson Assessment/Harcourt Assessment/Pearson  
Assessment

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	95	95	92	91	0
% Exceeds Standards	48	46	33	28	0
Number of students tested	312	301	301	333	0
Percent of total students tested	98	99	99	99	0
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	2	1	1	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	75				
% Exceeds Standards	8				
Number of students tested	12				
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards			100		
% Exceeds Standards			10		
Number of students tested			10		
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	47	65	35	62	
% Exceeds Standards	0	0	5	6	
Number of students tested	17	20	20	34	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	90	100	100	100	
% Exceeds Standards	55	83	45	43	
Number of students tested	20	24	11	14	

Notes:

In the school year 2004-2005, seventh grade students were not assessed in Reading.

Subject: Mathematics  
Edition/Publication Year:  
2005/2006/2007/2008/2009

Grade: 8 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test  
Publisher: Pearson Assessment/Harcourt Assessment/Pearson  
Assessment

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	97	95	96	96	80
% Exceeds Standards	61	51	58	54	42
Number of students tested	303	310	332	314	343
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	1	2	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	91	100			
% Exceeds Standards	27	40			
Number of students tested	11	10			
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	100				
% Exceeds Standards	80				
Number of students tested	10				
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards		90			
% Exceeds Standards		10			
Number of students tested		10			
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	76	67	64	55	
% Exceeds Standards	0	10	9	15	
Number of students tested	21	21	22	20	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	100	100	100	100	
% Exceeds Standards	96	75	69	94	
Number of students tested	25	12	13	16	

Notes:

Subject: Reading  
Edition/Publication Year:  
2005/2006/2007/2008/2009

Grade: 8 Test: Illinois Standards Achievement Test  
Publisher: Pearson Assessment/Harcourt Assessment/Pearson  
Assessment

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	98	95	95	95	94
% Exceeds Standards	31	19	32	23	25
Number of students tested	303	308	330	314	343
Percent of total students tested	99	99	99	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	1	2	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	1	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	91	100			
% Exceeds Standards	0	10			
Number of students tested	11	10			
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	100				
% Exceeds Standards	30				
Number of students tested	10				
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards		90			
% Exceeds Standards		0			
Number of students tested		10			
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	86	52	68	45	
% Exceeds Standards	5	14	0	10	
Number of students tested	21	21	22	20	
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards					
% Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
% Meets plus % Exceeds Standards	100	100	100	94	
% Exceeds Standards	56	36	46	56	
Number of students tested	25	11	13	16	

Notes: